March 1958

Ballet TODAY

Price 1/6

NADIA NERINA

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Cover Portrait
Nadia Nerina in Giselle
Photo: Houston Rogers

Toni Lander and Vladimir Skouratoff in a scene from Le Rendez-vous Manqué *the ballet which caused such a stir in Monte Carlo and Paris (see our critics' reports on page* 19). *The ballet had its London première at the Dominion Theatre on* 18*th February, and excerpts were given on ITV's* Chelsea at Nine *programme on* 11*th February*

Ballet TODAY

Established 1946

A MONTHLY REVIEW
DEVOTED TO DANCE
THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

EDITOR : ESTELLE HERF

No. 2 **Vol. 11**

Our next issue will be published on 19th March, 1958.

Royal Ballet Dancers Wed.

Ballerina Rowena Jackson was given away by Sir Clifton Webb, High Commissioner for New Zealand, at her marriage to Philip Chatfield at the Presbyterian Church, Marylebone, on 4th February. Beryl Grey, who resigned from the Royal Ballet some months ago, was Matron of Honour.

BACK STAGE

SOMEBODY seemed to pull the trigger of the starter's gun round about the 18th-19th February.

First off the mark was the much publicised Sagan ballet *Le Rendez-vous Manqué* at the Dominion Theatre for three weeks from the 18th.

Then, heralded in by a splendid reception given by the President Lord Pender, and other members of the Corporation of the Royal Albert Hall, at which H.E. The Ambassador of the U.S.S.R. Mr. Yakov A. Malik was the guest of honour, the Ukrainian State Cossack Company opened at the Royal Albert Hall on 19th February.

Beryl Grey, recently returned from Russia, was at the reception, and it was difficult to avoid being trampled underfoot by photographers when Miss Grey and His Excellency cut the ceremonial cake to mark the beginning of an experiment which may have far reaching results in the entertainment world.

With the bringing over of the Cossack Company the Royal Albert Hall, for the first time in its long history, goes into show business, and if this proves successful Victor Hochhauser, the young impresario responsible for this idea, together with Mr. Christopher Hopper the Royal Albert Hall manager, will leave early in the spring to find further suitable attractions in Russia for presentation here.

And of course 19th February also marked the opening of the Royal Ballet season at Covent Garden after an absence abroad of almost six months. During that time they have travelled 16,000 miles by special train through the United States and Canada, and played in 13 ballets in 18 cities, to half a million people. Just for full measure Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes did not return from America with the rest of the Company, this tireless couple took a plane to Cuba where they gave a few performances with the Cuban National Ballet, returning to London in time to dance in *Sylvia* with which they opened the season.

During the present season, which will end in June, Robert Helpmann is to return to the Company as a guest artist to dance in five ballets, *The Rake's Progress*, *Coppelia*, *Hamlet*, *Miracle in the Gorbals* and *Petrushka*.

Solitaire, Kenneth Macmillan's ballet which up to now has been danced by the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, was taken into the repertory of the Royal Ballet for the North American tour, and will be danced by them at the Opera House for the first time during March.

NADIA NERINA

Returning from the American tour ahead of the other members of the Royal Ballet, Nadia danced in the variety show at the Palace Theatre until 15th February, and filled several television engagements before rejoining the Royal Ballet when it opened its current London season.

FESTIVAL BALLET

I went along to Caxton Hall to hear John Gilpin give a talk on *The Development of Ballet*. It turned out to be a talk on his own career, and very interesting it was too. It is not necessary for John to have the glamour of the footlights and a Prince Charming costume to put him over to an audience. Although he confessed he would rather dance than talk, he captured and held the attention of several hundred people, members of London's Festival Ballet Club, who are sponsoring the series. The next talk is to be by Mike Davis on *Photographing the Ballet*, and will be held at The Chiltern Rooms, Baker Street, London, on Wednesday, 26th February.

Festival Ballet will embark on another extensive European tour at the termination of their present round of engagements in the provinces. They open in Paris on the 17th April and although, at the time of going to press, other dates have not been finalised, they will be playing in Lisbon, Munich and Zurich.

NEW CRANKO REVUE

Gilbert Vernon, South African dancer who was with the Sadler's Wells Ballet in 1947, joined the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet as a soloist in 1953, and was a member of the *Cranks* team throughout both the revue's London and New York runs (and later produced the Spanish version performed in Mexico City) is now amongst the principal artists in the new John Cranko musical comedy, *Keep Your Hair On* (reported last month) which opened at the Apollo Theatre London during February.

HISTORY-MAKING TOUR

At a special press conference held by Lucia Chase and Oliver Smith, co-directors of Ballet Theatre, it was announced that the American Ballet Theatre has been instructed by the State Department to schedule performances in the U.S.S.R., Poland and Czechoslovakia during this coming April and May, 1958.

The general outline of the tour in prospect, which calls for appearances in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Warsaw, Prague and other cities, has been developed by the State Department with its several embassies. The tour, which will run through the summer of 1958, will also take the company to Western Germany, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium and France.

The American Ballet Theatre will officially represent United States ballet at the Brussels World's Fair during American National Days, July 2nd, 3rd and 4th. It is also scheduled for festivals in Wiesbaden, Bergen, Stockholm, The Hague and Paris.

It will be the seventh overseas assignment by the company on behalf of the exchange programme.

Twenty Years After..... By JANET SINCLAIR

IF there is a heaven, I hope that those in it have no idea whatever of what is going on here below.
Because if there is a heaven, Lilian Baylis is there.

And if Lilian Baylis heard about what had been going on in London recently . . .

I only met Miss Baylis once. I was a very shy, enthusiastic schoolgirl being taken to my first ballet at Sadler's Wells Theatre. My host was my favourite "honorary uncle," and, doing things in his usual generous way, he had taken seats for us in the front row of the Dress Circle. In the interval, we met Miss Baylis, who had just been up in the Gallery handing out leaflets—how nostalgic it is to turn up an old Vic-Wells "green bill" from those days—Miss Baylis, for whom my honorary uncle had acted at the Old Vic. "Douglas?" she exlaimed in her characteristic throaty voice, "how nice to see you! And you *do pay!*"

During the following two years, while I was following the fortunes of my new love, the Vic-Wells Ballet, as frequently as my pocket-money would stretch to the entry to the Amphitheatre, I saw Miss Baylis many times. To us up in the one-and-threepennies, she was an institution. More than an institution, she was some kind of goddess from whose cornucopia flowed the magic spectacle of Argyle, Fonteyn Honer, Helpmann, Turner, in the entirely magic ballets of Ashton and de Valois. Looking back at Miss Baylis now, from a distance of two decades—she died on the 25th November, 1937—I see that, despite all the worries and frustrations and perpetual money problems, she must have been a very happy woman. She was a woman with a mission, and a mission that was well on the way (and the longer I live, the more I am convinced that only people with a mission are happy). She wanted a people's theatre, or two, or three: she wanted to give good drama, opera and ballet regularly, at reasonable prices, to the working people of London.

Stories of Miss Baylis are still legion. My own favourite is of the car accident in which she was involved in 1930.

An awed spectator: "Don'cha know oo that is? It's Miss Baylis, of the Old Vic!"

Faint voice from inside the overturned car: "*And* Sadler's Wells . . ."

The story may be apocryphal, but it has the ring of truth. Miss Baylis was immensely proud of her two theatres and her three companies. I believe she would have been proud when at the end of the war the Sadler's Wells Ballet moved to Covent Garden. For the interests of working class people were not entirely neglected so far as ballet was concerned; the Sadler's Wells Opera Ballet was formed and gave regular performances at Sadler's Wells Theatre. But about the present state of ballet in London I fancy she would be less satisfied.

"The Royal Ballet!" I can imagine her saying. "How very kind of the dear Queen! Let me read the Charter, please. Now, do we get *any* money? Will the company—dear, dear, I mean companies! —be able to play more regularly to my dear London audiences instead of worrying about those tiresome dollars all the time? And—well, how *odd* of our dear Queen! She seems to have forgotten to put in my opera and drama companies! Somebody ought to have reminded her . . ."

Personally, I'm very glad not to be that member of the Heavenly Host told off to explain to Miss Baylis that not only had her beloved opera and drama companies been left out entirely, but that Royal Ballet No. 1 was to leave England for five months, while Royal Ballet No. 2 was to be cast off entirely from Sadler's Wells Theatre, to say nothing of the fact that the opera company seems to be on the rocks again. In fact, London in the year of grace 1957 has been worse off for home-grown ballet than at any time since the Vic-Wells began, over a quarter of a century ago.

Dame Ninette de Valois, the other woman responsible for the birth and growth of the Vic-Wells/Sadler's Wells/Royal Ballet, is a remarkable personality. In twenty-six years she has achieved a miracle. Granted, Miss Baylis gave her a flying start—a regular home, a fine stage, and an orchestra: how many ballet directors before and since would sell their souls for all that! But in twenty-six years, despite the fact that she has systematically ignored or thrown away fifty per cent. of the talent available to her, she has built a company which, looked at broadly, is only surpassed today by the ballet of the Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow. Other shooting stars rise, shine, decline and die; the Vic-Wells/Sadler's Wells/Royal Ballet continues. As its apologists tell us, its most significant achievement is still that it has made it possible for an English girl to dance under, if not her own, at least an English name. All the world now knows that English girls can dance. A certain stiffness in the upper body, perhaps, a slight rigidity of the spine and ungraciousness about the shoulders; but on the whole, yes, we can dance. The Dame has proved her point, the company and the dancers have been honoured by the Queen, and the ideal that Lilian Baylis worked for has been entirely superseded. What next?

Now that our Ballet is Royal, may those who support it—and support it doubly, once via the income tax inspector and once at the box office, expect a clear statement of policy from the artistic directors of the company? Or could it be that there is no policy which can be clearly stated? If the ecstatic screams of joy from the specialist press on the occasion of the grant of the Royal Charter may be taken to symbolise anything at all, it should at least be that growing pains are over and mistakes of the past will not be repeated. Now there is time for the Wells—sorry, The Royal Ballet, formerly the Sadler's Wells Ballet, from Covent Garden, and the Royal Ballet, formerly the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, no longer from Sadler's Wells Theatre—to stop and put its house in order.

The first matter that needs attention, apart from the terrifyingly high wastage among ballerinas at the moment, is of course, the choreographical side. During the first fifteen years of the company's existence, only two choreographers received any chances worth speaking of (Helpmann's ballet were produced out of dire necessity and he obviously has little interest in this form of theatrical activity). After the period of frantic and largely misplaced choreographic energy at Sadler's Wells immediately after the war, the same policy renewed itself and two other choreographers, Cranko and Macmillan, have emerged as the dominant post-war figures. I find this particular exclusivity most alarming for the future of English ballet. It was sufficiently shocking that such talents as Tudor, Staff and Gore should have been and gone in pre-war days without ever making a ballet for the Wells (it is even more shocking that there is no Tudor ballet in the repertoire today): but the position is still more depressing at the moment. Tudor is working in America, Franca in Canada, Alan Carter in Munich, Walter Gore in Frankfurt, Jack Carter has produced a masterpiece in Holland: Staff has gone back to South Africa. Have we such a tremendous fountain of talent in England that those in authority can afford to have so many creative artists drained out of the country? Why has Michael Charnley not been invited to create a ballet for Royal Ballet No. 2? Yet another ex-Wells dancer, Peter Darrell, displays great choreographic potentialities—but we do not see his name on the roster of the Wells choreographers.

The other great problem—wastage of dancers, by which I mean the loss of first-rate artists as well as the failure to develop those remaining with the troupe—is largely bound up with the existing policy, or lack of it, with regard to ballets brought on to the boards. Most choreographers work most happily when using the same dancers over and over again, so lack of variety among choreographers used must mean one or two overworked plus many disgruntled dancers. The heavy emphasis on the "classical" repertoire has several unfortunate results, and in some ways the most unfortunate is the effect on the male dancers of the troupe. It cannot be the height of any young man's ambition to carry a ballerina round the stage, yet that seems at the moment the most to which he can aspire: for even in the majority of the remainder of the repertoire the male dancer is always expected to take a subsidiary part. It is fatal to look back, but here for a moment it is valuable to take a look at the Ballets Russes of Colonel de Basil. This troupe had a repertoire as varied, as interesting and as exciting as that of any other troupe in my memory, and more so than most. At its head on the male side stood four character dancers: Massine, Woizikowsky, Lichine, Shabelevsky. Not only were the men as strong as the women, but the repertoire was made to display them. What male dancers has the Sadler's Wells organisation produced who can compare with such men? What would such a company have made of such an artist as Alexander Grant? To take another example: consider for a moment the tremendous artistic development of John Kriza as we have seen it between 1946 and today. Can we point to any English dancer who has so increased in stature in the past ten years? Our male dancers improve technically, but as artists they seem to go no further. This can only be because only technique is expected of them. But there is more to ballet than technique—though I do not expect devotees of Balanchine's work to agree with me.

On the ballerinas of the troupe the emphasis on the classics has a slower, but equally unfortunate result. Those who are suited to dance the classical roles are put into them as soon as they are technically ready; but the outstanding soloist of the calibre of, for example, Beryl Grey has all the great roles behind her by the time she is twenty-one and what then has she to look forward to? Not to the chance that a great choreographer will make a ballet for her, for Beryl Grey created only one leading role in her entire career with the Royal Ballet. And

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Fine Feathers . . .

Costume plays so vital a part
in the Ballerina's life
that the knowledge of how to dress
and take care of costumes
is almost as important a part of her training
as the technique of dancing itself

in this article

DOROTHY WATKINS

of the Royal Academy of Dancing
answers some of the questions which puzzle
the young dancer not attached
to one of the leading schools, or
perhaps living in a district
where professional advice is not readily
available

FOR the past 12 years Miss Watkins has been closely attached to The Royal Academy of Dancing, one of her main responsibilities being the complete charge of the Wardrobe. In addition, she knows class and professional dancing from the inside, having been a teacher of long standing herself. It is this combination of technical proficiency and understanding of a dancer's essential needs that makes her the complete costumière.

"My early ambition was to become a professional dancer, and I had several contracts offered me," said Miss Watkins, "but I belonged to a generation which still regarded parents' wishes as law—and my father was wholly against his daughter entering a profession that would involve long absences from home on provincial and foreign tours (chiefly on Pavlova tours), so I had to accede to my father's wishes, being very much a minor. By way of compensation, I was allowed to use the large Hall in my parents' house on Kingston Hill as a studio, and worked off my frustration by teaching others to dance. During that time I was fortunate enough to study with Madame Karsavina, and later with Madame Rambert, with whom I did my Cecchetti work. As the years went by I built up a very large school.

I was always interested in costume from a design and practical point of view, somehow Madame Rambert found this out, and when the Mercury Ballet was born, I helped to make many of the original costumes. I made many successful costumes, for myself and this brought requests to "dress" other dancers. Among many assignments, I made all the costumes for Madame Karsavina's "special" performances. I had a great deal of encouragement from Madame Rambert, who gave me the nickname "Scarlet Scissors" which has stuck to me ever since."

Eventually Miss Watkins joined the staff of The Royal Academy of Dancing and little by little all wardrobe problems were passed to her. She deals with Regulation wear for Academy examinations. Her ideas have become more or less "standard," and she can give very good reasons why deviations from them are not strictly desirable.

THE MAKING OF A TUTU

In recent years, the range of materials available for ballet costumes has increased tremendously; the most suitable ones are not in short supply, as they were during and just after the war. Some of the effective fabrics, are, of course, highly expendable, and as the young dancer is usually not so affluent that she can disregard expense, it is important to know the most serviceable materials to buy. "I use a great deal of nylon net" said Miss Watkins, "it is good because it is self-stiffened and will wash indefinitely, in fact you cannot wash the stiffness out. For example, it is unsuitable for head bands, for this very reason. I washed a piece of this net three times in a strong detergent in an endeavour to use it for swathing, but the stiffness persisted. Incidentally the best material for a head band is *rayon* net, washed before use.

"For my part, I am very critical where costumes are concerned, every one I make is an individual model, a great deal of thought and work goes into it, that is the reason why I never use inferior materials. The tutus I make for the R.A.D. examinations are uniform in style, bodice and basque of white satin or shark skin, and skirts of ballet and nylon net, and so made that the wearer has only to step in and fasten 5 or 6 hooks. I do not favour the tutu of the 'tea-tray' variety, which allows for no softness of movement, and emphasises the dancer's anatomy too much. There are of course, 'roles' when this type of tutu fits the subject and must, therefore be worn, so, I make what is required, but I am not a devotee of the "hoop."

"You may think that using ballet net and nylon net is extravagant. It *is* expensive, more expensive than tarlatan, but I would never put good work into tarlatan, so I do not use it. Net can be washed many times, the under net (ballet net) can be re-stiffened by *spraying* it with gum arabic, or even dip starch, as I have already said nylon net needs no stiffening so in the end a costume made of these fabrics, even if it costs ten guineas or more, is economical in the long run, whereas the tarlatan variety grow limp after the first wearing, and *cannot* be washed or re-stiffened."

'I use *no* bones in any of my costumes, I believe in giving the dancer's body as much freedom of movement as possible. Creating the pattern is the most important stage, all my costumes start off with a 'foundation' model, *which is moulded to the figure on the naked body*. Not even a brassiere is worn when the foundation pattern is being made. Not that I decry a brassiere—support is necessary in the normal way, but I have no use for the ultra-fashionable 'cups,' strapped too tightly to the shoulders, so that they throw the girl's figure completely out of balance. *The strength of the bodice is in the lining*, a bodice properly cut supports the body, no *extra* support is necessary, a 'bra' is never worn with a bodice of my making. Once the foundation—which has, in costume, the same function as a shoemaker's last in footwear—is made, no further fitting is needed, this is very important as the finished tutu should look as if it had never been touched by hand."

There is another kind of tutu, that which is subject to perpetual hard wear, needing constant washing, such as those used for Lecture/Demonstrations travelling round the country. For these Miss Watkins recommends a cotton tutu; gaberdine for the bodice and organdi for the skirts. Organdi differs in texture, some remain stiff when washed, while others lose their stiffness, in which case they can be re-starched with dip starch in the ordinary way. Miss Watkins has invented a method of her own for adding extra body to the top skirt. It consists of rows of thick machine stitching, spaced in groups (which, incidentally have a decorative effect). A skirt may have a dozen or more of these rows forming various patterns, the number depends on the length of the skirt.

Continued on page 8

Pamela May

Belinda Wright

Beryl Grey

Colette Marchand

Marilyn Burr

Toni Lander

Maryon Lane

Rowena Jackson

Famous Ballerinas who wear shoes by

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New Books

Reviewed by
PIGEON CROWLE

The illustrations on this page are from the *Dancers of Today* series

John Gilpin No. 12.

Nadia Nerina No. 11.

Victorian Ballet Girl. By Ivor Guest. (*A. & C. Black*, 21*s.*)

In the past Mr. Guest has, in general, given us the grander scenes of ballet, his heroines have been the ballerinas, their settings the glittering backgrounds of the great opera houses of Europe. Now, in this tragic story of Clara Webster, we leave the flower-filled room of the star with its hot-house atmosphere, its triumphs and intrigues, and make our way to the crowded, dressing-room of the corps de ballet, where the Victorian ballet girl peers in a mirror and washes in a chipped basin.

The change of setting is no less revealing and absorbing. Grossly underpaid and overworked the lot of these girls was a hard one and, to make both ends meet, they were often obliged to work at some menial task during the day. But though their company was shunned by the puritanical and respectable, they were devoted to their vocation.

"Because we wear short clothes and show our feet which the Almighty gave us," wrote one girl rather pathetically to the editor of *Era* in 1858, "we are pitied by the most of our sex who sit in front of a theatre, and who are always very glad to look at us, although they think so badly of us; but I think, if anyone will seriously consider for a moment, they will come to the conclusion that, taking us as a body and considering the temptations to which we are exposed, we are not so bad as we seem to be."

And yet, in spite of their despised and underpaid conditions, these girls were touchingly filled with the same dreams and aspirations of all dancers ever since La Camargo made her first entrechat. Dressed all alike and performing identical movements, how intently and critically did they watch the performance of the soloists! With what excitement did the fortunate one receive a small variation in steps, or in dress as denoting progress in her career! And what dreams were cherished of one day equalling Taglioni or Grisi!

Clara Webster, daughter of a dancing master who had been a pupil of Gaetan Vestris, never achieved this dream, but she had become a soloist of the highest promise when she died from burns received as a result of an accident on stage.

She might easily have become the first great English ballerina and, perhaps, influenced the course of ballet history in this country; as it is, her story gives us a fascinating and more unusual aspect of ballet history. Well illustrated and with many attractive chapter headings taken from drawings of the period, this is a most delightful book.

Robert Helpmann. By Katherine Sorley Walker. (*Rockliff*, 15*s.*)

Turning these pages, I am nostalgically reminded of those exciting days during the war and just after when Royal Ballet was emerging from its chrysalis stage and, in spite of insuperable difficulties, unfolding and stretching irridescent wings. It was then that Helpmann gave the company Trojan service. By 1941 the call-up had seen the last of all the senior male dancers, save Helpmann, and Ashton was in the R.A.F. With the utmost facility, he bore the full brunt of the repertoire on his shoulders and went from classical dancing to character or mime with equal success, before turning to choreography. Though his ballets are no longer in the repertoire, a Helpmann first night never failed to stimulate and astonish, and his Hamlet was a masterpiece. Also when boys, taken straight from the School and used as stop-gaps before reaching military age, represented the male section of the company, he was able to give the youthful Fonteyn the experienced and understanding partnering—and of the highest degree—that is so essential to the poise and confidence of a young dancer.

But it was, by and large, his inspired clowning that most endeared him to his audience. His hilarious, nonsensical interpretation of Dr. Coppélius shocked the purists, but de Valois says she deliberately encouraged him, for great clowns are rare. Again, there were some who criticised the topical touches with which he delighted the house. No doubt, it was reprehensible of him to totter forth carrying an electric torch, on his way to the inn in the first act, but how the audience—having groped its faithful way to the theatre on a foggy night and in the blackout—rose to it! And on VE day when the curtain went up on Dr. Coppelius busily nailing flags to his balcony, the roof nearly came down!

One could go on reminiscing for pages, but you will find it all in this book which is a very full account of his many-sided career, from its beginnings in Australia to the present day. Perhaps it inclines a little to this side idolatry, but the fact remains that there is little that Helpmann can do wrong in the theatre. He is an artist who can time a movement, an expression or a gesture to perfection, and the many carefully chosen photographs bear witness to the great width and range of his talent and his mastery of make-up.

This book comes at a very opportune moment. The London stage has seen too little of this great mime of recent years, and now we hear that he is returning this season to the Royal Ballet. That is good news, for we don't laugh enough in ballet these days.

Principal Role. By Lorna Hill. (*Evans*, 10*s.* 6*d.*)

The adventures of a young exiled Balkan princess, first in the Swiss mountains and then in England, make such a lively story and the settings are so full of local colour, that I feel this book will be enjoyed by any girl whether or not she is interested in ballet.

Eventually, rather against her inclinations, the heroine becomes a pupil at the Royal Ballet School, but a revolution and the assassination of her brother recall her to her own impoverished country. The Royal Ballet flies out to give a special performance, and her coronation is subsidised by film and television companies—a sly and recently topical touch!

A Dictionary of Ballet. By G. B. L. Wilson. (*Penguin*, 5*s.*)

This is the first dictionary of ballet to be published in England and it would appear that the tremendous amount of research entailed has covered every aspect of the Classical art and also touched on Modern and National dancing. The subjects include such diverse ones as abstract ballet, the art of mime, and the career of Virginia Zucchi; there are drawings illustrating technical terms and photographs of ballet celebrities. It makes excellent reading and even staid statistics are enlivened by the easy style.

A valuable reference book, though the information in the case of *Ballet Today* is not up-to-date and a notable omission is the name of its editor.

Margot Fonteyn in Australia. Ed. C. Swinson & M. Frostick. (*Angus & Robertson*, 3*s.* 6*d.*)

A pleasant souvenir of the visit last year to Australia's Borovansky Ballet of our great ballerina and Michael Somes with Rowena Jackson and Bryan Ashbridge. It contains short essays on the careers of these dancers and a brief account of the history of Covent Garden, besides a collection of tributes to Fonteyn from many well-known people. There is a section on the birth and development of ballet in Australia which has an interesting parallel with ours, in that it, too, sprang from a school and ballet club. Dame Ninette de Valois writes a message and Dame Margot Fonteyn the graceful foreword. There are many excellent photographs, but it is a pity that these do not include some actually taken in Australia with the Borovansky Ballet, or on the various interesting occasions connected with the visit. Certainly, the text should have contained something of this.

Dancers of Today Series: Nadia Nerina, No. 11; *John Gilpin, No.* 12. *By Cyril Swinson.* (*A. & C. Black*, 7*s.* 6*d.*)

When, as a young student, Nadia Nerina arrived in England just after the war, she had never seen a performance by a professional company, yet six years later she was to become a ballerina in the Sadler's Wells Ballet.

Continued on next page

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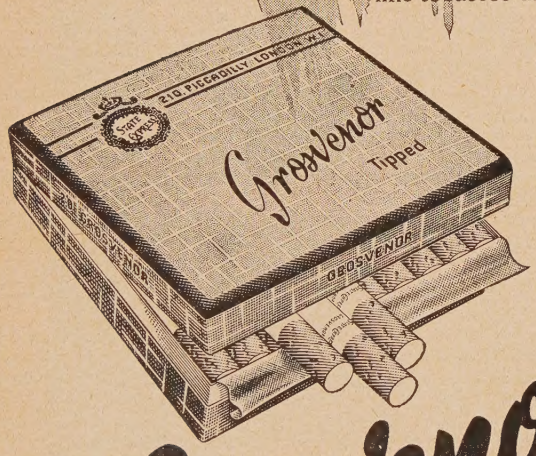

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"It's all those oranges!" a dancer sighed, enviously, as we watched the enchanting freshness, the tremendous exuberance of Nerina's performance as Fairy Spring in *Cinderella*. Certainly, never had a dancer seemed so over-flowing with sunshine, vitality—and vitamins—to a war-weary and still strictly rationed audience.

Her many T.V. appearances and personal tours have won for Nerina a wide public and this record, of one of our most sparkling ballerinas and illustrated with many excellent photographs, is very welcome.

I do not think it is generally known that though John Gilpin trained as a dancer his first professional appearance on the stage was as an actor. This was as Michael in *Peter Pan* and later as Robin in Daphne du Maurier's *The Years Between*. His success brought him many offers and soon he had to decide whether he wanted to be an actor or a dancer. Fortunately for ballet, there was never any doubt in his mind. His early promise as a dancer was soon fulfilled and for many years he has delighted us with his superb technical virtuosity, his classic grace, and attractive personality. He is Festival Ballet's most popular member, and without doubt one of the outstanding male dancers of today. This book, with its well-chosen illustrations, is most opportune, for it was published in the year of his company's very successful Continental tour during which he was awarded the Prix Vaslav Nijinsky.

TWENTY YEARS AFTER (*Contd. from page 4*)

if a choreographer should happen along who wants to make a major work with some ballerina other than Fonteyn, he seems to be faced with the premise that Fonteyn must create the role, whoever may succeed her in it afterwards. To grumble at this is not to imply, of course, that Fonteyn is not always a joy to watch; but Ashton rarely choreographs for anyone else, and it would seem needlessly discouraging to the other dancers to know they have little or no chance of the lead in any other new work or revival until Fonteyn has done it first.

And what of the dancers not ideally suited to Odette, Aurora or Giselle? Farron is a case in point. Had Farron been lucky enough to meet an Antony Tudor, her position today would be as dominant in the English ballet scene as that of Nora Kaye on the other side of the Atlantic. In the Royal Ballet at the present time, Farron as an artist is second to Fonteyn alone. For the choreographer of ideas, she is the ideal interpretative artist. Yet because of the narrowness of the repertoire, she stands well down in the bills where she should stand second, having to give priority in some cases to those infinitely her inferior as artists. The same is true to some extent of Maryon Lane, a dancer unique in her own sphere. I cannot believe but that choreographers such as Massine, Tudor, or Robbins would make ballets for either of these two artists quite as outstanding as those they have made in the past for Baronova, Nora Kaye, Melissa Haydn and others who cannot be said to have the label "classical ballerina" pinned on them—if only they were given the chance to do so. And when are we to see a major role created by the most individual of the younger ballerinas, Nerina? If we are never to see her in *Choreartium*, at least let something be made for her which will bring out and display her own particular characteristics to the full.

And while the directors of the company are stating their policy, let us hope that they will take a little time to remember the policy of Lilian Baylis. My other favourite story of her is that told by the artist who passed her office, at some time of financial stringency, to hear Miss Baylis on her knees urgently appealing to the Lord ". . . and please send me some good actors—*cheap*." Miss Baylis wanted to keep her costs down so that the ordinary working man could have some alternative to American movies or the pub on the corner. Does anybody concerned with running any of the companies she started devote half a minute's thought to the kind of audience she wanted to encourage?

FINE FEATHERS (*Contd. from page 5*)

TAKING CARE OF YOUR TUTU

As for the best way to store a tutu when not in use, Miss Watkins says the only way to keep a white tutu *white* is to put in into a box with plenty of tissue paper, preferably blue. If exposed to light, no matter how careful you are, white is bound to change colour. A tutu when not in use should hang, not on a hanger passed through the shoulder-straps in the usual way—a tape should be passed through the fork of the panties, and hung up, so that the skirts are upside-down, they will then stand up perfectly crisp and fresh when turned the right way up again. Of course you should never hang a costume without putting a cover over it, the best way is a bag of light material with a draw-string both ends, rather like a bird cage cover, or another method is to use one of the modern polythene bags which are completely dust proof. This bag must be large enough to take the tutu without disturbing the edges of the skirts. They can be safely transported in these bags.

New Recordings

Reviewed by BEDFORD CROWLE

CINDERELLA

We are lucky at last with two discs from Ashton's ballet, RCA. RD16048 with Rignold conducting the Covent Garden Orchestra, and HMV. CLP1144 with Irving and the R.P.O. However let me start by correcting a most misleading RCA sleeve—the music is not as performed by the Royal Ballet. It comprises the two suites Op. 107 and 108, devised and worked out by Prokofiev and which at times bear little resemblance to the original score of Op. 87. Musically they are very interesting and Rignold obtains a satisfying performance, though the playing is not quite to the R.P.O. standard.

Balletically, however, the HMV disc has it, as the items are in correct sequence and follow the ballet score. Also apart from bringing back so vividly a ballet in which, incidentally, Moira Shearer excelled herself, I found it crisper and more lively.

SPRING SYMPHONY

Schumann's First Symphony is the music for Dokoudovsky's ballet—do you remember him as a superb drummer, in *Graduation Ball*—and also, of course, for Taras' well-known ballet, *Perséphone*. The two most recent recordings are the best and I think individual taste must decide between Boult's throughly reliable and well thought out performance on a 10 inch disc, Nixa NCT17004, and Josef Krips' light and gay account on Decca LXT5347. It is coupled with a very good Fourth Symphony, and gave me that feeling of the fresh happiness of Spring, which the attractive photograph on the cover suggests.

ESCALES

Escales, or *Ports of Call*, is one of Lifar's many ballets for the Paris Opera and this time to Jacques Ibert's composition. This music is very different to the witty *Divertissement* or *Histoires*, as it consists of symphonic paintings of ports on the Mediterranean. RCA. RB16039 is the only LP and Munch's fine conducting of the Boston S.O. shows this pleasant though far from great work to its best advantage. His interpretation of Debussy's *La Mer*, on the reverse side, is one of the best of the many recordings.

TWELFTH NIGHT

This ballet for Mona Inglesby's company, was one of Andrée Howard's many successes for it had that light and subtle touch that is characteristic of her work. She drew on Grieg's works which included the incidental music to *Peer Gynt* that both Fokine and Lander set to their ballets, *The Four Seasons* and *Le Printemps* respectively. Few words need be said about HMV's record, ALP1530, with Beecham, his Choral Society, the R.P.O. and Ilse Hollweg, soprano—it is superb, leaving all others far behind. It will grace any collection.

THE MIRACULOUS MANDARIN

Pye have issued the suite from Bartok's score, MRL2541, and they also have given us a tiptop job. The work is notoriously difficult but Dorati must be heartily congratulated for navigating the Chicago S.O. through its tempestuous waters so recklessly, so courageously but above all with such command. I have no hesitation in recommending this performance to those who wish to be reminded of Rodrigues' revival at Covent Garden with the much missed Elaine Fifield. The coupling, Kodaly's very pleasing *Peacock Variations*, can be equally praised.

SONATA PATHETIQUE

To remind those who have enjoyed William Christensen's ballet to Beethoven's Sonata No. 8, there is a good recording by Gieseking, Columbia 33CX1488. His approach to this and the three other sonatas, Nos. 1, 19 and 20, has a clearer and fresher quality than most Beethoven interpreters but it is not out of keeping with the earlier works.

VENUSBERG BALLET MUSIC

Wagner was forced to compose this music for the Parisian première of Tannhauser, as an opera without a ballet would not have been acceptable to the French audience of those days. It has proved most popular and was choreographed by Massine for his *Bacchanale*. Kempe, as we know from his performances at Covent Garden has become a leading Wagnerian conductor and excells himself on this fine record, HMV. ALP1515, which includes the Overture, the *Flying Dutchman Overture*, and *Dawn* and *Siegfried's Rhine Journey* from *The Ring*.

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MEN IN BALLET

OLEG BRIANSKY

Interviewed by
ELISABETHE CORATHIEL

WITH his outstanding contribution to the success of Beryl Grey's brilliant South American tour this year, Oleg Briansky set the seal to his international reputation. He has become the Guest Star par excellence, the perfect partner, suiting his style with admirable adaptability to a variety of widely contrasted prima ballerinas and never sacrificing his own individuality in the process. A man of tact, firmly supporting but never overshadowing the lady, conscientiously and even scintillatingly insinuating his own solo work, he has succeeded in rounding out the finished performance with that indefinable quality which we call style.

Of Russian parentage, born in Brussels, and trained by that internationally respected dancer, Victor Gzovsky, young Briansky, after an apprentice-period with Roland Petit in the Ballets des Champs Elysées and then in Roland's second company, the Ballets de Paris, joined London's Festival Ballet on its inception in 1951, and remained with it four years. His first wholly mature work, therefore, was with a British company, and this entitles us to claim him, in a way, as an Ambassador-at-large for our own Ballet movement.

It was, in fact, the Festival Ballet that gave him not only first-class opportunities to create roles in entirely new ballets—in *Napoli*, for instance, and *The Merry Widow*—but also, in 1953, coupled him with Toumanova in one of the ballets every ambitious dancer dreams about: *Don Quixote*. This was a rousing success, and Toumanova enjoyed dancing with him so much that she immediately invited him to partner her on her next South American tour. Oleg, however, exercised commendable caution. His loyalty to the British company played a considerable part in his decision to wait awhile, gaining additional experience. Not until his existing contract with the company ended in 1955, did he break away, leaving on the best of terms and establishing himself as a recognised free-lance. It was the end of the Festival Ballet's season and the tour had finished in Boston. He walked out of the stage door on the Saturday night and in a few hours was on a plane with Toumanova, bound for South America and new adventures.

The tour took them to Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru and Brazil. In the intervals between dancing he perfected his Spanish and acquired Portuguese—accomplishments which were to prove immensely valuable to his future career.

Back in the United States, he arrived just in time to assist at the birth of the new Chicago Opera Ballet. This large and ambitious company set out to satisfy the increasing thousands of balletomanes scattered all over the continent, by giving them a repertoire including the pick of the classical ballets, but at the same time kept its feet firmly on the ground, as it were (however much its head might be in the clouds) and a wary eye fixed on the box office. From the outset Oleg Briansky was chosen as its guest-star. It started off with a flourish, Markova being the guest-ballerina, and its main attraction *The Merry Widow*. This was an entirely new production, arranged specially for America, and in it Oleg re-created the role which he had already danced with outstanding success in London. There is no need to go into details for everyone knows that this ballet made history. So sensational was its success that it was put on for a run in New York. Apart from the triumph of Alicia Markova, it opened up new worlds for Oleg Briansky. Not only was this his New York debut, but, in addition, he was invited to be the guest-star of the Metropolitan Opera during his stay in New York. So his name was actually up in lights on two different Broadway theatres at the same time—an unheard of phenomenon!

"Actually, I lost about two stone in weight, with the daily anxiety of taxi-ing through traffic-jammed Broadway from one theatre to another!" said Oleg. "I only had one performance a week at the Opera, otherwise I could not have accepted the invitation, but of course there were countless journeys to and fro for rehearsals, and these were quite wearing, too, owing to New York's traffic congestion. I had to miss one night of Madame Markova's season because the two performances clashed. She bore me no ill-will. Her congratulatory telegram wishing me luck at the Opera ended: "Please come back soon to your Merry Widow!" And the very day after the season ended Oleg was off with Markova on another South American tour, lasting nearly two months. They presented a sensational *Giselle* together, and their immense success, both in Rio and in Sao Paulo, is still being talked about.

His next South American tour was with Natalie Krassovska, to Peru, where they appeared in Tchaikovsky's *Francesca da Rimini*, newly choreographed by Lichine. From Lima he travelled back to rejoin the Chicago Opera Ballet for their first National tour, which lasted four months and took the company from coast-to-coast, visiting more than one hundred cities.

"This tour was a tremendous success and a wonderful experience," said Mr. Briansky. "Quite apart from the opportunity of dancing to such vast new audiences, it enabled one to assess the reaction of the average American in small towns where there were certainly no ballet-theatres, and very often not even theatres of any kind.

"In Britain, when we come to a theatre-less town, we can generally use a cinema; but American cinemas are not all adapted to stage shows. What, then, did we do? We appeared in "auditoriums" attached to different universities, and this was marvellous! To begin with, it brought us vast audiences of very young people—bobby-soxers!—and what stimulating audiences they were! But they were not the only spectators who came; they brought their older relatives with them, and a great many came independently, without being brought! It made me realise how extremely popular Ballet is becoming in America. The Chicago Opera Ballet's programmes proved exactly right for the taste of this particular kind of audience. *The Merry Widow* was a very safe speculation from the point of view of box office appeal, and another much-liked ballet was *Revenge*, which is based on the opera "Il Trovatore." Gradually, through efforts like those of the Chicago Opera Ballet, a degree of serious ballet-appreciation is being built up. I was tremendously impressed by the sacrifices people would make to attend the performances, which were ordinary evening ones, starting at 8.15. One man drove in his car from an outlying farm 250 *miles away* in order to be present, and cheerfully faced the same drive back after midnight. He was an ordinary, hard-working farmer, about the last person one might imagine would get "het up" about ballet, but he told me after the show he had never seen anything that gripped him so much.

"Which reminds me of another very touching incident in South America, when a native Indian woman came into my dressing room after the show with tears in her eyes. She said she had been thanking God for such a revelation of previously unsuspected beauty. Moments like this make one feel both proud and humble. I think it was the nicest compliment I had ever had. When one realises the immense pleasure one's art can give, that is a very great satisfaction, and it compensates for all the hard work and all the real discomforts a dancer's life often and inevitably entails."

And it is this, undoubtedly, that accounts for Oleg Briansky's continuous watchfulness, his self-criticism. His greatest ambition in life is to become a better and better dancer. All his hobbies, his interests, harmonise with this aim. In private life he adores visiting art galleries, or poking round obscure studios where really earnest artists work. If he has one extravagance, it is a passion for collecting fine paintings and objets d'art. In Paris he and his wife share part of the large flat owned by Oleg's parents-in-law, and it is full of treasures he has picked up on his numerous voyages.

"On my travels," he told me, "I have been especially impressed by the trends in American towns—even the smaller towns in North America, where University life plays such a vital role; also on the South American continent. Brazil, of course, is a terrific country—and I use 'terrific' in its literal sense. Sao Paulo, the leading industrial town in South America, looks as if it will have a population to equal that of London in a few year's time, and it is most encouraging to observe the preoccupation of this great city with artistic matters even while stepping up its industrial development. Great changes are taking place in the world, and while we may regret many precious things that are passing away, we should not forget that new values are being built up, often in the most unexpected places, and in this gradually evolving attitude towards Art, Ballet is certainly playing an important part."

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IN AMERICA — in *The Merry Widow* — In *Revenge* — Photos: Maurice Seymour

OLEG BRIANSKY

IN BRAZIL — with Alicia Markova — In *Giselle* — Photos: Richard Sasso

Above: In her favourite ballet and role—*Giselle.*

Right: In *Cupid out of his Humour*, in which Miss Von Rosen took the role of Venus when the ballet was first performed in Britain at the Edinburgh Festival in 1957 by the Swedish Royal Ballet.

Below: In *Miss Julie* with Teddy Rodin. This ballet was also in the repertory of the Company during the 1957 Edinburgh Festival.

Photos from left to right across the page by Enar Merkel Rydberg

left: Foto-Lilo, Berlin

right: Olofsdotter

ELSA MARI

Elsa Marianne von Rosen's background, though in no way connected with the theatre, had elements which were of inestimable value to her in her future career.

The family was an old aristocratic one which, in the 17th century, had migrated from Pomerania to Sweden and settled there under a regime which favoured foreign settlers prepared to make a useful contribution to the country's artistic heritage.

From a long line of ancestors, Elsa Marianne inherited artistic leanings ; her father took up art, and became a fashionable painter. Elsa Marianne was born in Stockholm, but spent most of her early life with her sister and three brothers in the family castle on the island of Okerö. It was a famous place, built by the great architect Tissin, who designed the Royal Theatre in Stockholm and many other public buildings which are lasting monuments to his skill.

Dancing lessons were arranged in the ordinary course of education for young Elsa Marianne ; but she showed such aptitude that the local classes soon had nothing further to offer her, and she was taken by her grandmother to live in Stockholm, simply and solely to prepare her for a ballet career, against which, despite their aristocratic background (and no doubt because of their artistic leanings) the family raised no objections.

Elsa Marianne was entered among the students at the Royal Ballet School, her first teacher being Otto Turessen, a Norwegian, who at that time was a premier danseur at the Royal Opera. She made such headway that in a short time she was awarded a scholarship to enter the Theatre Royal Copenhagen, as guest pupil—the first (and only) foreign dancer to be so honoured.

Although Sweden has a long and very fine ballet tradition, some of the finest teachers having either sprung from the Stockholm ballet or spent years working there, Denmark's Ballet tradition has been more carefully and continuously fostered, with the result that her two years' stay in Copenhagen gave Elsa Marianne the benefit of the famous Bournonville school in which Adeline Genée and many other eminent dancers were trained. She acquired the whole of the Bournonville repertoire, and subsequently appeared in many of these famous roles.

In the autumn of 1947 she was recalled to Stockholm to take up a position as solo dancer at the Oscars Teatrem, which is a privately-owned theatre. Here her first ballerina part was in the full-length version of Petipa's *Don Quixote*, produced by Albert Koslovskij. It was the dual-role of Aldonza-Dulcinea.

In 1950 she was engaged, with Birgit Cullberg, to undertake a ballet tour for the Stockholm State Theatre. The repertoire included three ballets, one of which was *Miss Julie*, based on Strindberg's famous play. Soon afterwards this ballet was presented at the Royal Opera House, with Elsa Marianne as guest star in the title role ; and thus began an association with the State Ballet which has lasted till the

E VON ROSEN

present time.

The participation of the Swedish State Ballet in the 1957 Edinburgh Festival was an official visit ; but Elsa Marianne has made other appearances in Britain as guest-star, notably with the Metropolitan Ballet at the Lyric, Hammersmith (making her debut on the wedding day of H.M. the Queen) ; with *Stars of the Ballet* at the Princes ; and in the Pavlova Gala at the Stoll. Other countries she has visited to dance in include Norway, Denmark, Spain, Italy, Germany and France. Naturally she feels most at home in the Scandinavian countries ; but she is very fond of dancing to English audiences, finding them most appreciative and responsive. "I never had nicer audiences than those in Edinburgh last summer," she says.

Her favourite ballet and role are *Giselle* ; but she has many favourites, too, among those she has not yet danced in. She has the highest admiration for all the ballets of Balanchine, especially *La Somnambula* and *Symphony in C*. She also adores Massine's *Symphonie Fantastique*. Her favourite partner is Bjorn Holmgren.

She has been dancing from the age of 12, and is now approaching her 20th year in ballet. Her great ambition, apart from improving constantly in her art, is to become a choreographer, and she is making her first experiment with Beethoven's *Prometheus*. She has a charming flat in Stockholm, furnished with a mixture of inherited antiques and newly acquired modern pieces ; says they blend very well. She can cook and sew ; but her favourite pastime is music—both recorded and manual.

Roles danced:

Dulcinea-Aldonza in	*Don Quixote*
Odette-Odile in	*Swan Lake*
Aurora in	*Sleeping Beauty*
All solo roles in	*Les Sylphides*
The Glove Seller in	*Gaieté Parisienne*
The Miller's Wife in	*Tricorne*
Created title role in	*Miss Julie*
Title role in	*Medea*
Created the Queen of Arabia in	*The Prodigal Son*
Created Venus in	*Cupid out of His Humour*
	The Woman in Rhapsody (Harald Lander)
Title role in	*Giselle*
Rose in	*Flower Festival at Genzano*
Angel in	*Paganini*
First Princess in	*The Swain and Six Princesses*
	La Lithuanienne (solo) at the Pavlova Gala, 1956
Blue Ballerina in	*Suite Classique* (Holmgren)

Top left: In *Gaieté Parisienne* with Verner Klavsen.

Right: Another delightful study of Miss Von Rosen in *Giselle* (Act I).

Below: With Björn Holmgren in the grand pas de deux from *The Flower Festival at Genzano*.

Brenda Bolton

Susan Alexander

Patricia Cox

DANCERS OF THE ROYAL BALLET

(formerly Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet)

All photos by Houston Rogers.

Anne Heaton

Noreen Sopwith

MEET OUR DANCERS

Sonia Roberts
possibly holds the record
for being the youngest
writer on ballet

In this article
she gives a brief biography
of some of our young
dancers of her own
generation.

By SONIA ROBERTS

IT is the wish of Dame Ninette de Valois that the Royal Ballet shall not be two different companies, but a homogeneous unit, capable of division into two groups, an end to which she has striven with thought, word and deed.

To write, therefore, about the dancers of the junior company, as if it were still a separate body, seems a direct countermanding of Dame Ninette's wishes. Moreover, many people may feel that it is a moot point, whether even in the art of ballet, where success and youth most often go hand in hand, the opinions of 18, 19 and 20 year-olds carry great weight.

However, there is another side to the question. A successful ballet company can only function if it has a positive communal personality, a personality which derives from the ideals and idiosyncracies of the individuals who compose the company. Therefore, although many of these young dancers may be, in relation to the main body of the Royal Ballet, very junior employees, their outlook on their art is of enormous importance, to all who view their performances. This is particularly true of the provinces, where often the visit of Royal Ballet Company 2 is the sole balletic experience of many thousands of people.

Ballerina of the 'little company' is of course Ann Heaton. If ballerinadom is assessed on the basis of experience, then Ann is truly an assoluta in relation to the other artists, for her professional dancing debut was in the early part of 1945 when she appeared as a page in the New Theatre production of the *Sleeping Princess*. Her first Giselle, with the then Sadler's Wells Ballet main company, came in the American tour of 1953, when at 24 hours' notice, she replaced Elvin. These facts combined with her sophisticated on-stage maturity, a natural aplomb, to which, as was exhibited in the Company's recent London season, she has added a dramatic depth, favourably reminiscent of the 3-D characterisations of Norah Kaye, tend to give the impression that Heaton is a much older dancer than is in fact the case.

She was born in Rawalpindi, India in 1930, but was brought to England before her first birthday and grew up in Birmingham, where her first dancing teacher was Janet Cranmore. In private life, she is Mrs. John Field and lists among her off-stage interests, antiques and antique jewellery.

Another Birmingham girl in the company is Noreen Sopwith. This dancer's career has been an alternation between the Royal Ballet and the Ballet Rambert. Such a combination of companies has meant a lot of touring, but this is something which Noreen has never minded. She enjoys touring, particularly abroad, although she makes the proviso, that when in England, there is no place to live to compare with London. Another interesting factor in Noreen's varied career has been the contrasting rôles she has been called upon to perform. However, she does not believe in having favourites, and states firmly that she prefers to tackle each rôle "strictly on its own merit."

In this respect, she differs greatly from Susan Alexander; who says "I know it sounds corny, but *Giselle* is my favourite ballet and my favourite rôle." By now of course, every reader of a Sunday newspaper will know that after Susan's Covent Garden debut in this rôle, she had so many flowers; the only suitable space to store them at her flat was the bath. What perhaps is less well known, is the preparation that lay behind this triumph.

"When I was first told to learn the role, I had no idea that I would be dancing it so soon, or at Covent Garden, but I immediately wanted to learn all I could about the rôle. I read and re-read Cyril Beaumont's book, particularly the chapters about the very early version. During my four week's holiday I played the music over and over to myself, I believe that those people who say that the *Giselle* music is mediocre are thinking of it out of context; for dancing, it is perfect. It is so expressive. I was fortunate enough to be able to see Fonteyn and Nerina dance the rôle, and of course one always learns from seeing such great artists perform, but I think Ulanova's Giselle is the one that impressed me most." Susan Alexander's performance incorporates many Ulanova touches. I asked if the inclusion of these was deliberate or sub-conscious?

Susan replied that for an honest dancer, there could be no such thing as deliberate copying but that without a knowledge of what constituted the great performance of the past, "there would be nothing on which to found an original interpretation of one's own."

Susan, who comes from Edinburgh, is a former pupil of Marjorie Middleton and of the Elmhurst School. Asked if she had ever thought what she would have become, had she not chosen dancing, she said, that the thought of doing anything else had never crossed her mind. She went on to explain how completely dancing fills her life. "I share a flat with two others, in fact if I could find a way to take it around on tour I think I could say I was completely contented with life. We all share the chores. I enjoy cooking, but being a dancer means that one gets no time to develop organised leisure pursuits, not even domesticated ones. An evening off is apt to be devoted to washing tights and sewing shoes."

This is also the finding of Canadian born corps de ballet dancer Lynn Seymour who says that since she arrived in Britain she has had no time to develop a hobby. "Back home, my hobby was ballet, now it's my job." As a new arrival from Vancouver, homesickness made Lynn hate Britain, but now she likes the country a great deal.

Also from the Commonwealth is Brenda Bolton, native of Sydney, Australia. "My reason for taking up ballet must be one of the oddest in the business," recalled Brenda. "My sister learnt the piano. After enduring my sister's practice my mother decided I must have a quiet 'social accomplishment'; she just couldn't stand that racket multiplied by two." Since their days at the Sadler's Wells School it has been level pegging and sharing a dressing room for Brenda and Patricia Cox. "It was not always as friendly a rivalry as it is now," Brenda confided, "but I think the sense of competition has done us both good." "In the theatre one has to learn early, that no one is indispensable." Brenda described her friend's wedding to fellow dancer Leslie White, which took place in 1955. "At eighteen, she was certainly the smallest bride I have ever seen and I think she holds the record for the youngest marriage in the Royal Ballet as well."

Patricia, ("my childhood idol was Fonteyn—well whose isn't") then explained that her favourite rôle was Swanilda. "She is such a cheerful uncomplicated soul; but I love *Pineapple Poll* too. I think I would say that it is the favourite ballet of all those we dance in the English provinces. Patricia told how she became a pupil at the Sadler's Wells School. "When I said I wanted to become a dancer—my mother replied, 'well—if that is what you want—you had better go to the best place to learn'!"

"My mother taught dancing before her marriage," said Bristol-born Clover Roope "so I suppose that my dancing career is not really setting a family precedent." A year ago Clover made her debut. "I was the orange page in *Cinderella*. My main fear was that I would spoil everything by dropping the oranges. They wobbled but remained safe" she recalls.

Now Clover has had the satisfaction of returning to Covent Garden to create a leading role in Cranko's *The Angels*. "It has been a marvellous stroke of luck" was her modest remark, "but I should hesitate to say that this was my favourite rôle. I feel that I need a great deal more experience before answering that question.

Experience was where we started, but before we leave the Royal Ballet Company 2, a final biography to show that it is not only ballerinas who need perseverance to get to the top, sometimes the 'backroom boys" need just as much patience. To prove this point

Continued at foot of col. on page 19

News from the World

Hope Sheridan

Reporting

from

NEW YORK

The New York City ballet opened its 20th New York season on November 19th after a somewhat longer lay off than usual. A rest period of any sustained length shows regardless of the calibre of the company. The New York City Ballet is no exception to the rule. The corps de ballet appeared ragged and the principals were far from their customary dance form.

Fanfare is not a ballet which grows in one's affections with continued viewings. Rather, the tighter a new cast stretches the weave of its choreographic invention, the thinner the material looks. Its appeal is based mainly on low comedy rather than actual dance versatility. Yvonne Mounsey carries whatever honours may be attributed to this ballet. Her dancing is lyrical and her presence gracious in a short but rewarding passage.

The reworking of *Caracole*, now known by its musical title *Divertimento No.* 15, lost most of its verve and wit in the transition. It is now just another of one of Balanchine's musical ballets with some fine moments in it, but not the steady and forceful stream of creation so evident in *Serenade* or *Symphony in C.* Melissa Hayden displays superb technique in the more complicated passages of this ballet which are fiendishly difficult. Allegra Kent possesses a warm and ingratiating quality, while fine work is turned in by Diana Adams, Patricia Wilde, Yvonne Mounsey, Herbert Bliss, Nicholas Magallanes and Roy Tobias. It's becoming more and more evident that Tanaquil Leclercq possessed a dramatic quality of mood which not only cannot be replaced but which served as a very delicate balance among the female ballerinas.

A slimmer and radiant Tallchief was welcomed back by an enthusiastic audience who cheered her every move. With the elegant Églevsky as her partner, *Pas de Six* becomes a welcome interlude. I still cannot help but feel that this ballet is a waste of their valuable talents however excellent the performance.

Square Dance, the first première of the season, on November 21st, started off slowly but proved to be a brightly rewarding piece. While it is not the very top drawer Balanchine, it is a light, joyous work, full of the effervescence of good spirits and physical well being. Using two movement of Corelli's *Suite for Strings* plus excerpts from various *Concerti Grossi* of Vivaldi as the basis of his argument, Balanchine proceeds to draw a formal analogy between 18th century court dances and the American square dance of today, replete with its caller. There is a very distinct similarity in overall format between the two even though one is couched in the most elegant and restrained manner and the other appears to be a show of spontaneous good spirits. Utilising the services of one of the foremost square dance callers in the United States, Elisha C. Keeler, Balanchine ingeniously and surely blends the three mediums together. *Square Dance* starts slowly but builds to some exciting solo passages. Patricia Wilde demonstrates superbly her mercurial beats and turns. Fine support is given by Nicholas Magallanes as her partner. Contrary to his usual brilliant form, Balanchine has not come up with anything too effective for his corps of six girls and six boys. They all dance well and back up the principals with brio and youthful embullience. While the dancers go through their paces, the caller transforms the balletic enchainments into the vernacular of the square dance hall. The effect is charming and not at all affected. Leon Barzin conducted.

H.S.

NEWS FROM AMERICA

In October of 1957, Doreen Tempest left Britain to join her husband, Robert Lunnon, who teaches ballet in Chicago. In November she joined the Chicago Opera Ballet which was dancing for the Lyric Opera Company at the time. She made her debut in *La Gioconda*, alternating with Maria Tallchief in the ballerina part of Ruth Page's *Dance of the Hours*. Doreen Tempest is now touring the United States with the Chicago Opera Ballet, co-starring with Mia Slavenska, Sonia Arova and Barbara Steele and dancing in George Skibine's *Idylle* and three Page ballets, *Revenge*, *The Merry Widow* and *The Triumph of Chastity*.

Doreen completed her training as a scholarship pupil at the school of the then Sadler's Wells Ballet and joined the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet in 1951, touring the United States and Canada with the company in 1951-2. She was a principal with the company for the past three years, creating roles in ballets by John Cranko, Kenneth MacMillan and Alfred Rodrigues. Her classical roles were in *Swan Lake* and *Coppelia*, dancing the première of the new de Valois production of the latter at Stratford's Shakespeare Memorial Theatre.

Robert Zeller, who has conducted the Festival Ballet in Great Britain, the Royal Ballet during its American and Canadian tours and for Miss Alicia Markova in London and in America, is directing a new thirteen-week radio series in New York City entitled *Spotlight on Ballet*. The programme is designed to present the best of ballet, the choreography and music are described by the young conductor. Programmes include one hour devoted to the ballets of George Balanchine, Leonide Massine, Anthony Tudor, and Dame Ninette de Valois.

Paris born and New York resident Prima Ballerina, Marina Svetlova, having completed her regular bi-annual run of engagements in Europe, closing with a final appearance in Val Parnell's *Star-Time* on Thursday, January 9th, returned to New York at the end of the month.

Svetlova opened her series with a B.B.C. Christmas Day *Music for You* presentation, in which she featured with Oleg Briansky, in the snow scene pas de deux from *The Nutcracker*. This was a first view for London of the Alfred Rodrigues choreography for this ballet, previously seen only at La Scala, Milan, when danced at a grand gala performance by Margot Fonteyn early last year.

Svetlova also appeared on T.V. in Paris and Brussels, and at present is on a 14 weeks Concert Ballet Tour taking in New York State, Florida, California, etc.

Alicia Alonso left Mexico City on Thursday, December 12th to fly to Russia where she had been invited by the Government to guest star with companies in Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev.

During her stay in Russia, Miss Alonso will perform the leading roles in *Giselle*, the full-length *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *Coppelia*. Her first performance was in Moscow on December 25th in *Giselle*.

The ballerina is being accompanied by her husband, Fernando Alonso, who directs her school and company in Havana.

Following her performances with the Russian companies, Miss Alonso was joined in Helsinki in the middle of January by Igor Youskevitch, where they began a six month tour of European ballet capitals.

George Jackson

from

CHICAGO

THE ROYAL BALLET

The current personnel and repertory of the Royal Ballet have been described in detail by *Ballet Today*'s correspondents in London and New York City. Another description would tax the patience of our constant readers but a report of the Royal Ballet's reception in Chicago may be of interest, particularly since the majority opinion here differed considerably from that in the above-mentioned cities.

To understand Chicago's reactions, one should mention the company's last season here, in the winter of 1953, when it was still known as the Sadler's Wells Ballet. The highpoint had been Frederick Ashton's *Daphnis and Chloe;* the other new short ballets, Ashton's *Homage to the Queen* and John Cranko's *The Shadow*, were not particularly well received but with his Ravel work Ashton had—as the newspapers put it—"sent his stock soaring" and with his, that of the entire company. Then the season closed with Ashton's *Sylvia* and the stocks came crashing down. The three act ballet had been a fashionable hit in New York City but Chicago could hardly have reacted more unfavourably. Not since 1948 when the Paris Opéra Ballet presented Serge Lifar's *Le Chevalier et La Demoiselle* had there been as little applause for a major dance production at the Civic Opera House and as little praise in the following day's press.

The *Sylvia* of four years ago can probably be blamed for the poor advance sale and a few rather empty houses toward the beginning of the Royal Ballet's recent Chicago season, 16th December to 5th January. But the company was in wonderful dancing form and after

News of Dancers Around the World

Left: Doreen Tempest
Photo: Paul Hansen

Right: Marina Svetlova
Photo: Maurice Seymour

See News from America

the initial hesitation, the public crowded the Civic Opera House.

Despite the recent loss of several top ballerinas, the female contingent of the Royal Ballet has never been stronger. Among the many excellent young soloists Anya Linden, Maryon Lane, and Annette Page were favourites. Of course, there were complaints about individual ballerinas: some of Fonteyn's fans felt that her technique had declined since last seen here and some of Beriosova's fans felt that she had not developed sufficiently. But most complaints ceased when Fonteyn danced in *Firebird* and Beriosova in *Prince of the Pagodas*. Nadia Nerina and Rowena Jackson were highly praised for their Swanilda in *Coppelia* and their individual variations in *Birthday Offering*, less so in *Swan Lake* and *Sleeping Beauty*. Nerina's strong dramatic portrayal of the Faded Beauty in *Noctambules* and subsequently her disappointingly undramatic one in the title rôle of *Firebird* puzzled many people. Nerina and Jackson were thought to be the Royal Ballet's strongest female technicians, but particularly Jackson, an eccentric rather than classical dancer who needs more rôles outside the strict classical style.

The male contingent which Chicago had formerly thought inferior, was now considered to be quite respectable. Michael Somes and David Blair were praised as excellent partners and stylists despite what many found were limited abilities in solo work. In the very strong group of *caractère* and *demi-caractère* dancers Brian Shaw, Pirmin Trecu and Alexander Grant were the first names and it was speculated that Philip Chatfield or Gary Burne may develop into the *danseur noble* which the Royal Ballet still does not possess.

The company as a whole was praised for its rare ability to adapt its dancing style to ballets from different epochs. The nineteenth century classics *Swan Lake* and *Sleeping Beauty* have always been great successes here, to which the new production of *Coppelia* has now been added. The dancers do these ballets full justice but this season it was thought that the dancers themselves were not done justice by the British choreographers. Particularly Ashton failed to salvage the reputation he had lost with *Sylvia*. His *Birthday Offering* which had pleased London and New York City was dismissed by Chicago as "not an important ballet" and unfavourably compared to similar occasional pieces by Balanchine. *La Péri* fares even worse earning the sub-title, "a piece of junk in the 1911 manner." The decline of the choreographer of *Symphonic Variations*, *Wedding Bouquet* and *Daphnis and Chloe* to the level of "Soho chichi" was mourned.

By contrast both Kenneth MacMillan ballets, *Noctambules* and *Solitaire*, were well received. Also "not great ballets," it was thought, but fresh, interesting and perhaps promises for the future. Judging by Chicago's attitude towards *Sylvia*, Cranko's *Prince of the Pagodas* should not have been a success; it had not been one in either London or New York City. Chicago took a liking to it. Once more people said "not a great ballet" and even enumerated many flaws of construction but applauded "despite."

A third epoch of ballet was represented in the repertory by two Fokine-Stravinsky works, *Petrouchka* and *Firebird*. Chicago agreed with New York City and London that the former was a mummy but thought that occasionally it is interesting to view even such relics. *Firebird* had the success of a true revival. Balanchine's version was unfavourably compared, especially the translation of story into dancing was thought incompetent once one had seen how Fokine's every movement is dramatically as well as choreographically meaningful. Chicago begged to differ with Balanchine's statement that it makes little sense to revive old ballets for Fokine's *Firebird* was the only new Royal Ballet production which did more than entertain the audiences, it moved them and *was* called "a great ballet."

THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET SCENE

by

PAUL MOULDS

Although some Australian dancers have achieved wide recognition overseas, little is known of ballet activities in Australia.

Australians are ballet minded, and what is more, its popularity is ever increasing. We have a population not much greater than that of London, and this is spread over a whole continent, yet we can support a professional Ballet Company of 60 dancers, with their own orchestra and conductor.

This Company operates profitably without any subsidy from the government for nine months of the year, and goes into recess for the other three. This may not be an ideal set-up, but it helps to cut costs, and employment is such that most of the Company's regular artists can find part-time jobs which allow them ample time for ballet training. Some have regular off-season jobs as teachers, others go overseas for the few months, returning for the next season.

In the soloists' ranks, we find many overseas dancers from some of the bigger ballet companies, but we have had only one dancer who has constantly filled top-billing. This is Peggy Sager, who has been a great favourite with Australian audiences. This season, she has been partnered by Frenchman, Robert Pomie, a young dancer from the Paris Opéra Ballet on loan here for 18 months. He had just achieved the position of Premier Danseur with his Company before coming to Australia. He is a dancer of manly physique and buoyant character, with a spectacular style, although he sometimes lacks polish.

Elaine Fifield who recently returned to Australia, and has danced this season, has been somewhat hampered by lack of suitable partners, although Kenneth Melville, who is partnering her, is a dancer of merit.

This year the Company has presented full length versions of *Swan Lake* and *Nutcracker* (*Casse Noisette*), augmented by *Les Sylphides*, *Giselle*, *Aurora's Wedding* and *Prince Igor*.

Nutcracker has been performed by the Company in the preceding year, and this full-length version seems very popular here. It has also given a number of children in each capital the chance of a stage appearance, thus encouraging them in their studies.

The Act II performance of *Swan Lake* will never satisfy ballet audiences here, after having seen the full length version, which was produced in Australia for the first time this year.

Robert Pomie is producing a new short ballet to music by Lalo, which as *Namouna* was used for the ballet by Petipa about 1882, and later was treated by Serge Lifar as *Suite en Blanc*. Pomie's *Classical Serenades* is to his own selection of Lalo's music, and is an original work. It has no story, but is a suite of dances. He calls it "neo-classical" in treatment.

Following its current Sydney season, the Company will tour New Zealand and then return to Brisbane. They never stay in one city for more than about three months, and they cover thousands of miles each year. The average distance between capitals is about 700 miles.

Continued on page 20.

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IN MONTE CARLO ★ # THE SAGAN BALLET ★ IN PARIS

The Winter Ballet Season here has been of exceptional interest, culminating in the world première of the three act ballet by Françoise Sagan *Le Rendez-vous Manqué*. The Société des Bains de Mer had arranged for four companies to appear during the fourteen days season. Houses were packed and extra performances had to be laid on at short notice.

The Chinese National Theatre was well received, adequate programme notes enabling us to follow the symbolism of the costumes and movements. Miskovitch, with his "Ballet 1957 de Paris," brought Chauviré, Amiel and Algaroff to give us three programmes of considerable merit. I have noted before that Miskovitch has a flair for selecting ballets that bring out the technique of his dancers. Of the three premières produced I preferred *L'Adagio*, choreography by Lifar and music by Albinoni. This was just pure dancing with the minimum of décor and costume. Danced by Chauviré and Algaroff it was a lovely example of sheer technique. Laid low by 'flu I was unfortunately unable to see again the Spanish Ballet of Pilar Lopez.

The Salle Garnier has rarely seen such a distinguished audience as when the curtain rose for *Le Rendez-vous Manqué*. Long heralded in the Press this first ballet by Françoise Sagan, the 22-year-old best-seller writer, was known to be of unusual concept. Of the three acts, two were to symphonic music and one to straight jazz. Michel Magne, whose "Symphonie Humaine" includes the singing of birds, the voice of Hitler and the bursting of bombs, undertook the music as his first ballet composition. John Taras choreographed the symphonic acts, with Don Lurio responsible for the jazz. The décor by Bernard Buffet included some clever uses of back drops and lighting. Ballet Théâtre Français gave the leading rôles to Toni Lander, Noelle Adam and Skouratoff.

A young man—Skouratoff—waits in his room for the visit of a married woman with whom he has formed a liaison. Will she come? The flames of the fire he has lit turn into five dancers. He chases them away and knocks over a bowl of roses. They come to life and dance before him. Then, dreaming, he sees the hands of a clock dance. To a dry tic-tac Edith Allard and William Lundy dance an original and attractive pas de deux.

In the second act the young man is invaded by a surprise party. They bring food and wine and begin to dance wildly to a jazz piano played by Claude Bolling. A policeman arrives to demand quiet. While he is plied with liquor the dancers engage in a grave minuet. He soon discards his cap and jacket to join in the revelry. A young vamp—Noelle Adam—seeks to seduce the sombre young man. They climb the stairs to the bathroom, exposed by the raising of a back cloth. The efforts of the minx are frustrated when she pulls from his pocket the scarf of the loved one. He leaves her in despair.

The third act starts by evoking the story of their idyll. Their first meeting at a cinema, a screen at the back of the stage giving the captions of the story. It was only now that we saw the long awaited Lander. Then his frantic search for her, finally finding her in a jeweller's shop. This dream ends in his awakening, still waiting for her. She will not come? He takes poison. The door then opens and she enters. Mastering his growing weakness he dances a passionate pas de deux with her until he sinks dying upon a couch. She bends gently over him as the curtain falls.

It is extremely difficult to express an adequate opinion on this ballet in a few words. The action is vivid throughout and well sustained by the music, which is tuneful and restrained, reminding me somewhat of de Monfred's *Suite New Yorkaise*. A French critic nicely summarised the ballet as "a modern story told in music and dance." The "mise en scène" by Roger Vadim was excellent. A tendency to eroticism and suggestiveness in some of the dancing may give offence. This gives the impression of a youthful effort "pour épater les bourgeois." The ballet would be more mature and better without it. The great talent of Lander might have been given more scope for expression, though her pas de deux with Skouratoff were beautifully fluent. The ballet has considerable merit, being imaginative and dramatically effective. I much enjoyed it.

J. R. FARRINGTON

A lot of fuss over nothing. That is the conclusion to be drawn after the first performance of *Rendez-vous Manqué*, the ballet by Françoise Sagan presented on 20th January at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées.

At the beginning, George Skibine was approached for this ballet, but he afterwards turned down the offer. The choreography was then divided between John Taras for what one might call the more classic sections and Don Lurio, a choreographer engaged by Mlle. Sagan for the parts danced to jazz music.

There are some interesting dance passages but there is a total lack of unity in the choreographic movement. Vladimir Skouratoff (the young man) and Toni Lander (the woman) dance well. But we knew that already. Noëlle Adams, who is a cabaret dancer, plays the part of the vamp. The corps de ballet is very ordinary and even when it loosens up, it is not very distinguished. Vadim, the producer has brought off the tour de force of arranging the development of the scenes by means of curtains which are lifted and lowered, thus giving life to this story which would otherwise be too long.

The décors by the painter Bernard Buffet are most impressive and dominate the whole production. Michel Magne, the composer of the score has not been spared the most acid criticisms and catcalls. He is accused of having borrowed from Chopin, Tchaikovsky, Messiaen, etc. This music is rather sweet in the parts which are meant to be lyrical and splits the eardrums in the jazz sections. The eroticism which is not lacking in this rendez-vous, and there is far too much of it, does not unfortunately make the ballet, and *without art* eroticism cannot be portrayed on the stage. That is my opinion, and it was shared by almost all the Parisian press.

A reception was given on 14th January in the foyer de la danse for Lyane Daydé and Michel Renault, the stars of the Paris Opéra on their return from the USSR where they danced at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. Mr. Georges Hirsch, the director of the Opéra stressed the fine and resounding success of the French stars in Soviet Russia. In telling of his experiences, Michel Renault talked to us of the *Giselle* given at the Bolshoi, which takes a whole evening, for the ballet by Théophile Gautier and Adolphe Adam is there given in its entirety. The choreography of the Moscow *Giselle* is the same as that given at the Opéra, and at rehearsal the two stars from Paris found themselves in unison with the Soviet corps de ballet. Besides *Giselle*, the two artists gave two concerts at the Salle Tchaikowsky, which included extracts from *Les Sylphides*, *Entre deux Rondes* (Samuel-Rousseau-Lifar) and *Roméo et Juliette* (Tchaikowsky-Lifar).

Amongst the ballets which are shortly to be included in the repertoire of the Opéra Comique, one notes: *Le Bel Indifférent* based by Serge Lifar on a dramatic scene by Jean Cocteau, in which Claude Bessy triumphed not long ago at the Opéra in Monte Carlo, and *Frères Humains*, with choreography by Michel Descombey to the Rhapsody in Blue by Gershwin, and decors by Manuel Parres, which was created in 1951 at the Théâtre de la Cité Universitaire.

A new association "Danse et Cinéma" has just been created in Paris on the initiative of F. de Santerre, the dance journalist. The aim of this association is to strengthen the ties which link the cinema and the dance, so that these two arts may be able to co-operate still more closely.

The painter, Marc Chagall, will be the designer for the revival at the Paris Opéra of the ballet *Daphnis et Chloe* with new choreography by Serge Lifar. The première of this ballet, with music by Maurice Ravel, choreography by Fokine and decors by Leon Bakst was given by the Diaghilev Company in 1912.

The Ballets Modernes de Paris, directed by Françoise and Dominique carried out in 1957 an important tour of Africa. They have been invited back there and are about to leave for the Ivory Coast. The company consists of, Françoise, Dominique, Paul d'Arnot, Jacqueline Serreville, Michèle Nadal, etc. Last year, the dancers Françoise and Dominique travelled some 25,000 km. in the Congo. They hope to beat their record in 1958, going from the Ivory Coast to the Belgian Congo.

FERDINAND REYNA

MEET OUR DANCERS—(*cont. from page* 15)

I quote the story of Peter Higgin, now the company business manager. On leaving university Peter Higgin decided that the theatre was the only career for him. Everywhere he applied for a job he was turned down. The few theatre jobs he acquired, folded on him, he was thrown back on the labour market. Teaching, copywriting, stage managing, and then public relations, mark the intervals between his applications for employment at Covent Garden. Now after five years he has achieved his goal. "Tell me, was it really worth the effort?" I asked. "Worth it?" he replied in a tone which plainly showed his incredulity at my absurd question. "Of course it was worth while." While British Ballet commands this type of devotion from those who do the unglamorous chores, the art is in little danger of dying.

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LONDON REVIEWS

ROYAL BALLET No. 2

A SURVEY OF THE SEASON AT COVENT GARDEN

THE recent Covent Garden season of The Royal Ballet No. 2 was a turning point in English Ballet history; for it marked the first phase of a plan to amalgamate the two companies—once The Sadler's Wells Ballet and The Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet—into a group larger than English Ballet has ever before seen. The occasion also marked the end of the small company's connection with Sadler's Wells Theatre—henceforth and presumably for as long as it exists, to be considered essentially an opera-house. The programmes included *Les Sylphides*, *Giselle*, *Pineapple Poll*, amongst known works, a transfer in a new production of the larger company's *Veneziana*, and three new ballets—*A blue rose*, *The angels*, and *The Burrow*. The season was a stiff test for the company and the main impression left was that, despite its big touring experience on many kinds of stages, the company is not able to project this particular repertoire to full effect here. An "opera house" (or "ballet house") style takes some acquiring, and the dancers have to exercise great ingenuity both in the actual mechanics of movement and in the controlled intensity of mime, to make their interpretations effective in so large a theatre.

This problem of projection rests firmly on the matter of *dance style* (a sense of both completeness and of inevitability in the rendering of every rôle); no Covent Garden season before has so clearly shown the general shortcomings of what must, I suppose, be called "The 1950's standard English Ballet style": there were occasions in every performance when one could not avoid seeing (and being distressed by) such faults as hunched shoulders, stiff necks, awkward arm positions, flabby spines and a general lack of firm placement. This is not meant as a sweeping fault-finding with this company in this season: it is today a more-or-less general condition in all companies whose members perform too often each twelve months, visit too many different theatres, and receive too little individual tuition day by day.

Other companies, home and foreign, often show this lack of precision of movement and of movement-control; it is a condition having a direct bearing on the sensitivity of the teachers of the daily classes and also on the dancers' own appraisal of their own talents. Briefly, it means that we see ample evidence that English Ballet is still a long way from having generated a performing style that is: uniquely English, completely theatrical (in the sense of being coherent, disciplined and yet harmonious to watch in operation), and which has observable roots in the best balletic thinking and analysing of the past 200 years.

Veneziana is a kind of free fantasy on what could be called "the idea of Venice" (vide the writings of Goldoni, de Sade, Mann, etc.) which is based on and in turn illuminates a well-chosen score derived from various Donizetti operas. Andrée Howard shows her mastery as a choreographer capable of piling up a series of small, neat effects into a big and opulently exciting total effect. The cast, in general, made a better dancing success of this than of anything else in the season: Margaret Lee proved a not unworthy follower of Elvin in the chief rôle; Patricia Cox and Noreen Sopwith vying with Stanley Holden, Donald Britton and Michael Boulton in packing their ingenious solo and group numbers with vitality and gaiety.

After repeated viewings of the three new ballets, their main impact is of excessive strain and tortured determination; they share (but in varying degrees) the besetting fault of present-day English choreography—an excess of movement-for-movement's sake. When will choreographers learn that stasis is a valid ingredient in their vocabulary? The other excess, which, individually, is doing more damage to the development of all English choreographic styles than anything else, is the constant misuse of the *pointe*; here carried to extremes that must have had everybody from Taglioni to Fokine turning rapidly in their graves.

As a *planned stage* in the amalgamation of the two companies this season seemed in no way constructive; does anyone imagine that what these dancers went through (and perpetrated also) will help anything when the time comes to marry the two companies and present a first season showing their joint capabilities? The welding process is going to need much more skill than is at present evident.

A. V. COTON.

(*Continued from page 17*)

This requires real stamina on the part of the dancers, who appear for eight performances a week, the principals for three to four performances a week. Australians are usually of splendid physique, as may be expected of an outdoor nation, and most of their dancers are able to stand this pace without undue strain.

Ballet here obtained great impetus with the coming to Australia of Dame Margot Fonteyn, and her partner Michael Somes, accompanied by two other Covent Garedn artists, New Zealanders Rowena Jackson and Bryan Ashbridge.

Dame Margot's dancing was superb, and set an example which will be long remembered here. She had to appear every night of the week, and danced on a stage that must have been small compared to those of London, but these factors in no way affected her and she was an unqualified success.

Rowena Jackson has a vivacious, pleasant style which balanced well with Dame Margot's graceful ease. The full Ballet Company had the wonderful inspiration which must come when dancing with such a wonderful artist, and they did a good job as main support.

Finally, a few words on tuition available here. We have many good teachers in Australia, and new ones are making their appearance all the time. Many have studied overseas, and the general standard is quite high.

The R.A.D. examiners visit here once a year, and they spend many months putting students through their paces. The R.A.D. also presents two overseas scholarships every alternate year, and at least two or three teachers in every capital offer overseas scholarships every second year.

For the student who cannot go overseas immediately, the Borovansky Company offers good experience and excellent classes. Dancers are of course free to leave for overseas at the close of any season.

Many of our dancers return home after training and experience in Britain, but some naturally stay. These dancers, such as Elaine Fifield, will continue to rise, reminding you that the Australians are still hard at work.

A MAN WITH A MISSION

There is a strong streak of the missionary in the Estonian-born Heiko Kolt, trained in the Imperial-Russian schools of ballet. For now a resident in Belgium he decided to teach a group of Flemish lads how to express themselves through mime and movement.

The task he set himself can be judged by one's knowledge of the Flemish-speaking people of Belgium. Expressiveness and sensitivity to outward signs of emotion are not characteristics of these people. They have no balletic tradition or background.

Yet Heiko Kolt was determined to break through. In the Belgian town of Torhout he formed a group from the boy's school there. The town itself is rooted in pagan mythology and takes its name from the local God of thunder—Thor's Wood. Hence his group is called THOR.

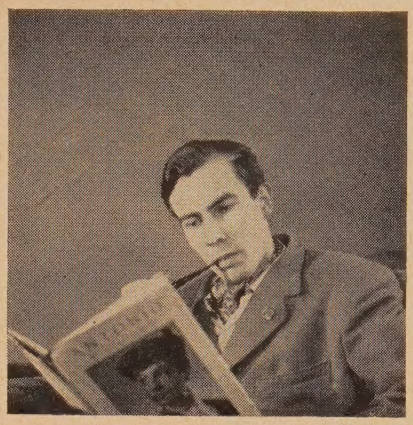
Recently Kolt—under the auspices of the Student Christian Movement—brought his group to the vast open spaces of London's Albert Hall and surprised us. His boys are a challenge to every student of movement. Deeply sensitive to music these lads can express thoughts and ideals by movement and mime. Their show is colourful and exceedingly fast moving for non-professionals.

Judged by standards applicable to the youthful group Thor has something to say to the world of dance and stage. It deserves attention for we can learn from it. If the Flemish people can do it why not someone at a boy's school in Britain? Perhaps we have not a dedicated Heiko Kolt—a man with a mission and true conception of what dance really means.

MONTAGUE CALMAN.

If you are hankering after a career in ballet my advice to you is DON'T DO IT, but if you still refuse to be put off—like Angela, Joy, Denise, Elizabeth and David whose own stories enabled me to build up a composite but true picture of the hopes and fears of a ballet student —then at least after reading these articles you will know what is in store for you.

ROYAL BALLET STUDENT



THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF ARTICLES IN WHICH THE READER IS TOLD THE TRUE STORY OF THE ROAD WHICH LIES AHEAD FOR THOSE WHO TAKE UP BALLET AS A CAREER

By DAVID BENN

"It's tough . . . a lot of hard work . . . severe discipline and no glamour. The ballet is like the Brigade of Guards, it consists largely of square bashing" said Arnold Haskell.
"There is an end to square bashing even in the Guards" I ventured hopefully
Mr. Haskell left me no illusions
"In Ballet there is no end, no matter how high you get you still have to do it."

THE AUDITION

THE whole thing possibly began like this.
Your teacher thinks you have great promise. Certainly you are one of her best pupils. You have been dancing for a number of years and you are one-hundred-per-cent. fit. You work hard, whilst your friends are getting out enjoying themselves, or relaxing, you are practising and struggling to fit in your school work too. So your teacher has sufficient faith to arrange with the Royal Ballet School for you to have an audition.

By the time the day arrives you are at a high pitch of nervous excitement, and as you journey to the place where the audition is to be held you are buoyed up by the admiration and good wishes of your friends at your own ballet school. You feel six inches taller and fit for anything. You want to tell everyone in the train where you are going, but one glance at their faces tells you that they are more interested in their newspapers than they would be in your news, however important it might seem to you. So with great difficulty you keep it to yourself, which is as well because by the time you have reached your destination you have worked all that out of your system and the nearer you get the smaller and more miserable you feel. You change with a lot of girls you have never seen before, but you can see at once that they look older and more experienced than you, and certainly more confident.

Just as you are wondering if you dare turn tail and run, a door opens and everyone starts moving into the classroom. You see with relief that it is going to be a mass audition, and you try hard to treat it as just another class, but you cannot forget that you are being closely watched, very closely watched. Feeling as if you have two left legs you dance as best you can, but out of the corner of your eye you see that everyone else is dancing ten times better. You hope it won't end too soon. If only it would go on long enough for you to rally your shattered confidence. "I can do much better than this"' you long to plead with them "please just give me a little longer." But you daren't open your mouth, and from somewhere in the front you hear a voice. "Go and get changed" it tells you "you will be hearing from us."

Feeling still smaller and even more miserable you go back home. It serves you right you suppose. Fancing thinking *you* could get into the Royal Ballet School. You hope none of the people at home will laugh at you ; that really would be too much. You think of all those other girls, you wonder if the suspense of waiting to hear can possibly be as unbearable for them as for you. As for you, well, you *know* you ruined *your* chances when you wobbled on points.

Life seems rather empty during the next few days. School is a bore and the thrill has even gone out of ballet classes. You wonder why you don't give it all up—but you don't.

Then one day you arrive home and there is a letter for you on the table with a London postmark. It hardly seems worth opening it, yet you do so with trembling fingers. You read the letter twice, you pinch yourself to make sure you are not dreaming, you read it again. It is not until some hours later that you really *register* that you have been accepted for the Royal Ballet School.

Your first impulse is to pack right away, until you realise you have nothing to pack. The next few days are spent being fitted for a new tunic, getting together a stock of new shoes, blocked, unblocked and character shoes, and all the other clothes you will need. You had no idea there would be so many.

The local newspaper suddenly becomes interested in you and sends a reporter out to interview you. The next day you buy a dozen copies, and everyone at school has bought one too, and vie with each other to shew it to you! You had told a lot of people that you had failed your audition, but now they know differently they begin to treat you differently, and you find yourself quite a celebrity, except to one of the teachers who feels it is her mission in life to reduce your ego to reasonable proportions and keep your nose to the grindstone.

And school suddenly becomes a very serious business. You have by now approached the Education Committee to try and get a grant from them. Quite possibly they will voice doubts as to whether ballet can be considered as "further education" (how dare they!) and in any case they cannot give you an answer until they know how you have done in the G.C.E. Examination. You apply yourself to your school work as if your life depended on it (as of course to you it does) and there are still the ballet classes. It would be fatal to get out of practice now. Soon you will be devoting your whole time to your first love—the ballet.

It is the thought of this that keeps you going, and somehow you manage to get it all in. With anxiety mounting again you send off your examination results to the Education Office. Suddenly you feel so near your dream—and yet so far. The weeks pass and frantic telephone calls bring only the information that it is being considered. At long last the letter comes. Surely nothing can go wrong now?

Generally it is a form on which your father is asked to state his income. This is not a good time to mention this subject. With all the things you have persuaded your father you simply must have, his overdraft has soared, and you know he has been receiving letters of his own—all from the bank manager, who is not at all interested that it is in a good cause.

A few days later you hear that you have been awarded a grant some ten times your pocket money, and you feel you are a woman of means. You rush round to say goodbye to everyone and in a flash the time has come to set off.

Suddenly you realise that you are leaving home, but the pangs are softened by other emotions. You are off to London and the beginning of the path to fame.

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DIARY

THE ROYAL BALLET AT COVENT GARDEN
(formerly Sadler's Wells Ballet)

19th	Feb.	Wed.	(eve)	*Sylvia* (Fonteyn, Somes, Farron, Shaw, Clegg, Hart)
22nd	,,	Sat.	(mat)	*Les Sylphides, La Peri, The Lady and the Fool*
22nd	,,	Sat.	(eve)	*Les Sylphides, La Peri, The Lady and the Fool*
25th	,,	Tues.	(eve)	*The Prince of the Pagodas* (Beriosova, Blair, Farron, Edwards, Linden, Lane, Shaw)
27th	,,	Thurs.	(eve)	*Sylvia* (Fonteyn, Somes, Farron, Shaw, Clegg, Hart)
28th	,,	Fri.	(eve)	*The Prince of the Pagodas* (Linden, Hynd, Lindsay, Edwards, Page, Lane, Shaw)
1st	Mar.	Sat.	(mat)	*Sylvia* (Fonteyn, Somes, Farron, Shaw, Clegg, Hart)
1st	,,	Sat.	(eve)	*Sylvia* (Nerina, Chatfield, Farron, Ashbridge, Shaw, Clegg)
3rd	,,	Mon.	(eve)	*Scenes de Ballet, The Rake's Progress* (revival), *The Firebird* (Guest Artist: Helpmann)
4th	,,	Tues.	(eve)	*Les Sylphides, The Rake's Progress, The Firebird* (Guest Artist: Helpmann)
5th	,,	Wed.	(eve)	*Scenes de Ballet* (Jackson, Shaw), *Coppelia* (Nerina, Blair, Linden, Farron. Guest Artist: Helpmann)
6th	,,	Thurs.	(eve)	*Les Sylphides, La Peri, Daphnis and Chloe*
7th	,,	Fri.	(eve)	*Les Sylphides, La Peri, Daphnis and Chloe*
8th	,,	Sat.	(mat)	*Scenes de Ballet* (Jackson, Shaw), *Coppelia* (Nerina, Blair, Graham, V. Taylor. Guest Artist: Helpmann)
8th	,,	Sat.	(eve)	*Scenes de Ballet* (Jackson, Shaw), *Coppelia* (Beriosova, Chatfield, Hart, Linden, Farron)
10th	,,	Mon.	(eve)	*The Sleeping Beauty* (Fonteyn, Somes, Beriosova, Jackson, Shaw, Ashton)
11th	,,	Tues.	(eve)	*The Sleeping Beauty* (Nerina, Blair, Boulton, Jackson, Shaw, Powell)
12th	,,	Wed.	(eve)	*The Sleeping Beauty* (Beriosova, Chatfield, Lindsay, Jackson, Shaw, Ashton)
13th	,,	Thurs.	(eve)	*The Sleeping Beauty* (Fonteyn, Somes, Beriosova, Jackson, Shaw, Ashton)
14th	,,	Fri.	(eve)	*Solitaire* (first performance), *The Rake's Progress, Daphnis and Chloe*
15th	,,	Sat.	(mat)	*The Sleeping Beauty* (Linden, Blair, Boulton, Park, Usher, Powell)
15th	,,	Sat.	(eve)	*The Sleeping Beauty* (Jackson, Chatfield, Lindsay, Page, Clegg, Powell)

THE ROYAL BALLET ON TOUR
(formerly Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet)

W/c	24th	Feb.	*Memorial Theatre, Stratford-on-Avon*
,,	3rd	Mar.	*Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton*
,,	10th	,,	*The Pavilion, Bournemouth*
,,	17th	,,	*Palace Theatre, Plymouth*
,,	24th	,,	*New Theatre, Cardiff*

FESTIVAL BALLET ON TOUR

W/c	24th	Feb.	*Gaiety Theatre, Dublin*
,,	3rd	Mar.	*Gaiety Theatre, Dublin*
,,	10th	,,	*Grand Opera House, Belfast*
,,	17th	,,	*Empire Theatre, Liverpool*
,,	24th	,,	*Alhambra Theatre, Glasgow*

FOREIGN TOUR

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BALLET RAMBERT ON TOUR

W/c	24th	Feb.	*Her Majesty's Theatre, Carlisle* (2 weeks)
,,	10th	Mar.	*Grand Theatre, Croydon*
,,	31st	,,	*New Theatre, Hull*
,,	7th	Apr.	*White Rock Pavilion, Hastings*

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Young Dancers

CHILDREN AS CHOREOGRAPHERS

ONE of the most exciting recent developments in British ballet was shown at the Rudolf Steiner Hall on 9th January, when the Cecchetti Society presented something quite new: a programme consisting entirely of ballets composed, costumed and performed by children.

Five years ago Cyril Beaumont, chairman of the Cecchetti Society, had the splendid idea of organising a choreographic competition for young dancers. He considered that, since most children have the urge to create, it would be useful to encourage them to make use in their own composition of the steps they learn in class; this would give them an incentive to develop their dancing, and stimulate them to take an interest in other subjects such as music and art, as well as observing life around them.

Results were so good that this competition has become an annual event; and examples of the works submitted for the first three competitions, presented at the Rudolf Steiner, showed that everything Mr. Beaumont hoped for has been achieved and a good deal more. Considering the tender years of the choreographers, the average standard is astonishing; the best work had an imaginative quality and above all a musicality which is regrettably rare in contemporary choreography.

The two winners this year were Susan Salomon (Senior Section) and Amanda Knott (Junior Section). Both are pupils of Nesta Brooking, who has done important pioneer work in making training in composition an integral part of ballet training. Her work has proved that, while there is no substitute for talent, all dancers have *some* choreographic talent, and this can be enormously strengthened by progressive training and constructive criticism.

Susan Salomon's ballet *Modern Child* was highly sophisticated, the work of an assured craftsman interested in tackling difficult problems. She treated her theme (three ages of childhood) in a highly abstract manner: dancers in stylized practice dress performed neo-classical patterns which gradually increased in complexity, with various groups moving in cross-rhythms.

Amanda Knott's ballet *Chess Pieces*, in violent contrast, was strongly dramatic, each piece being clearly characterised in movement. Though the twelve-year-old choreographer had clearly seen *Checkmate*, she treated the theme in her own way, and from time to time showed delightful flashes of imagination. This was just as true of her costumes as of her choreography: I particularly liked the witty off-beat costume of the Bishop (who wore stylized gaiters).

Acquaintances in the Glade and *Woodland Mischief*, both composed by Rosalind Eyre (who was a pupil of Irene Kinsey and who has now joined the Royal Ballet School) had rather obvious themes involving elves and children wandering in the woods, but were distinguished by a simple and satisfying musicality. (They reminded one how rare it is for the professional young choreographers of today really to *use* the rhythm and phrasing of their music.) Anthea Carr, as a Frog, leaped about with attractive spontaneity.

Another very young dancer to make a vivid impression was seven-year-old Rosalind Oakley (pupil of Jill Payne) in her own composition, *The Doll in the Toyshop Window:* there was not much dancing in this, but the mime was beguiling. Dancers in the middle age range who stood out were Amanda Knott, Ann Whitley and Nicolas Chagrin, all showing a fine Flamenco arrogance of head and shoulders in Nicolas Chagrin's bull-fight ballet *La Corrida*. Outstanding among the older dancers was Vivian Dodds (a pupil of Irene Langman), who made two appearances; this attractive girl showed good technique, a fine lyrical classical style, and a warm personality.

In spite of the large numbers involved, the show went with a swing, and there were no waits between items: this did credit to the organisers and to the artists. (One small group of Diana Barker's pupils appeared no less than ten times, and must have had a good many quick changes.) The only mistake was excessive dimming of the lighting in certain numbers requiring a mysterious atmosphere: this made facial expressions almost invisible.

FERNAU HALL.

Photograph top right .. .. *by Jack Blake*

Chess Pieces

The Knight .. .. *Nicolas Chagrin*
The Pawn .. .. *Amanda Knott*
The Queen .. .. *Susan Weldon*
The Bishop .. .. *Ann Whitley*

From:—

THE TRANSVAAL, SOUTH AFRICA

Dear Editor,

BALLET TODAY, is really a favourite with us South Africans.

It has everything about the Ballet, which everyone immensely enjoys.

I learn ballet with Ivy MacDonald, and I am fourteen years of age. I have been learning one year.

Every week, the students from our studio dance for the crippled and poor children and the orphans.

I must congratulate you on your wonderful book of ballet!

Please never stop printing it, as we all look forward to reading it monthly.

Yours sincerely,

PATRICIA STRIJDOM.

Photo below.

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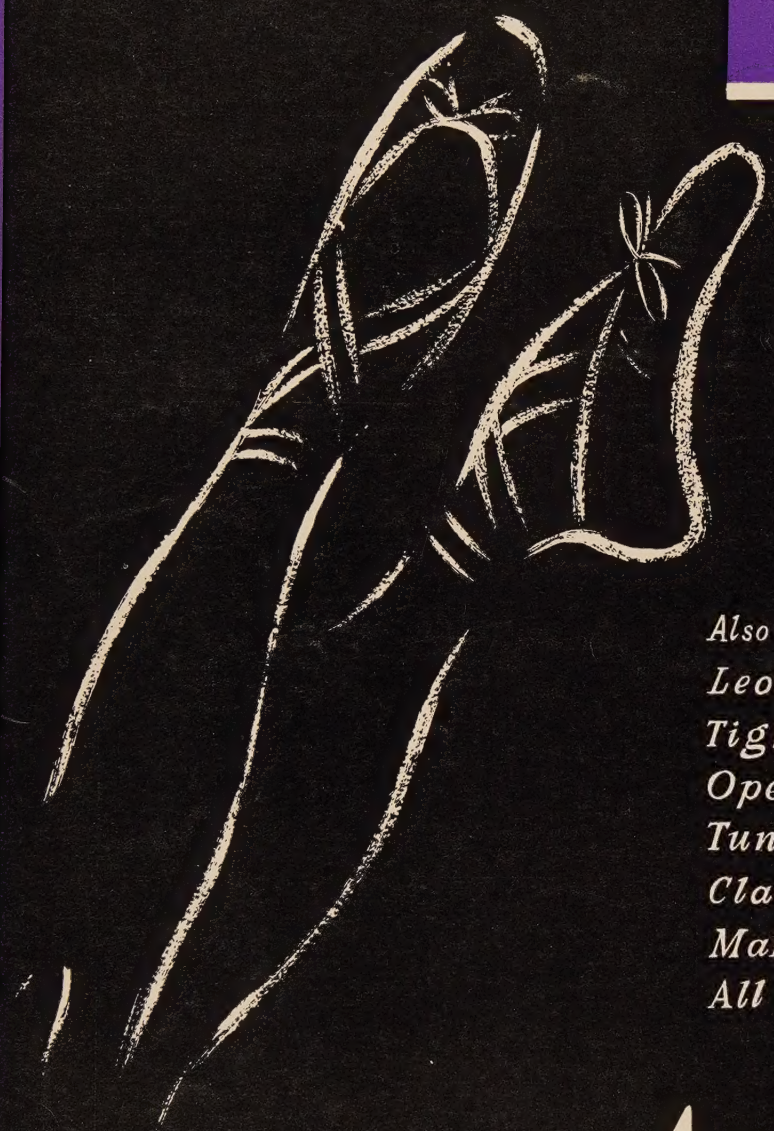

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